

Tower dedication honors two Airmen killed in combat

FORT POLK, La. — Tactical controllers Staff Sgt. Jacob Frazier and Airman 1st Class Raymond Losano were honored during a dedication ceremony for a new range control tower in November.

The Airmen died serving in Afghanistan fighting in the war on terrorism. They were the first tactical control Airmen killed in combat since the inception of the career field during the Korean War.

by Airman 1st Class Trina Flannagan



Tactical air control party Airmen visit the 52-foot wooden range control tower Nov. 30 following a dedication ceremony. The tower was dedicated to Staff Sgt. Jacob Frazier and Airman 1st Class Raymond Losano, the first tactical control Airmen killed in combat since the inception of the career field during the Korean War.

Among the hundreds of thousands of Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines fighting the war on terrorism, tactical controllers are a group of sometimes “silent and forgotten warriors” who live each day as both Airmen and Soldiers, said Brig. Gen. Gregory J. Ihde, commander of the 57th Wing at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev.

The tower is located above the woods and swamps of Louisiana at the Joint Readiness Training Center, home to Detachment 1, 548th Combat Training Squadron. The range is the primary facility responsible for training tactical controllers before they deploy.

“The [tactical controllers] command and control aircraft and train with pilots and live ordnance,” said Lt. Col. Gary Ducote, detachment commander. “They use the tower to control aircraft in our training area.”

The detachment had been working from a World War II-era bunker for decades. It was an old, beat-up wooden shack, the colonel said. After the war on terrorism started, they

were authorized to build a new tower.

“These two Airmen were killed in Afghanistan, and [we] thought this was a proper way to honor them, their sacrifices and the enlisted career field,” said Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey Eberlan, detachment superintendent. “Their death is a testament that we’re there. The Air Force is there. We’re boots on the ground. It’s not just the flight-line, not just the people associated with the aircraft. Other Airmen are out in front where the bullets are flying. They’re [in Iraq] clearing buildings, down in the streets in Baghdad, Fallujah; embedded and putting their lives on the line like our Army counterparts.”

Sergeant Frazier was assigned to the 169th Air Support Operations Squadron, Illinois Air National Guard, and served as the tactical controller for a 12-person special forces team calling in air strikes on enemy locations. He deployed to Afghanistan in January 2003 and was part of a unit searching for suspected al-Qaida members. While returning from a mission March 29, 2003, his convoy was ambushed, and Sergeant Frazier and another person were killed.

Airman Losano was in the 14th ASOS from Fort Bragg, N.C., and deployed to Afghanistan with the 82nd Airborne in March 2003. As a special operator, his job was to parachute behind enemy lines and call in air strikes. Airman Losano’s unit was ambushed April 25, 2003. He was one of two servicemembers mortally wounded in the attack. Before Airman Losano took his last breath, he called in the air strike that saved the rest of his company.

— Senior Airman Andrea Knudson
2nd Bomb Wing Public Affairs